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ABSTRACT

The importation into developing countries of theories and models of educational administration used in developed nations appears untenable for several reasons, according to a review of the literature in the light of issues raised by T. Greenfield. The field of educational administration in developing countries remains incompletely defined, making it difficult to assess the applicability of any theories or models. To finalize a definition, developing countries must identify their national goals, determine how education can play a role in achieving those goals, and then create administrative structures and administrator training programs that are suited to these educational ends. The qualifications for administrators must be established and programs devised to provide appropriate training in technical, human relations, and conceptual and analytic areas. Elementary research will be required to determine the current status of programs so that appropriate plans for change can be made. (PGD)

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CRITICAL ISSUES IN THE PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATORS IN DEVELOPING AREAS

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Introduction

Given the current thrust in education across the Caribbean today and considering the strain which is being put on our limited resources to sustain and increase this thrust, it is incumbent on all concerned to strive to ensure that the greatest value accrues to the greatest possible number. The nations of the region cannot afford to commit man-power, money and other resources to education, and yet remain complacent over high degrees of failure or be satisfied with mediocre performances in their schools. It is being recognized that the mere provision of places in the form of buildings is not enough, and attention is being turned to the training of personnel to man the schools and systems. The particular aspect of education that is of immediate interest in the context of this symposium is the preparation and training of persons to give leadership, direction and inspiration to education in the region. The purpose of this paper is to examine some critical areas for decision-making in this regard.

Should We Import Theories and Models of Training from the Developed World?

It is customary for the developing world to turn to the developed world for models, for solutions to our problems. It perhaps seems quite natural to do so considering their experience and development. Yet, today there is enough evidence to suggest the need to proceed very cautiously in this direction with respect to educational administration.

For example, Wiggins (1979) reminds us that human experience is contextually bound. He argues that it is the failure on the part of the developed world to recognize this fact that has led to their efforts to assist the developing world being branded as "imperialistic, colonialistic gestures of the strong over the weak". Wiggins maintains that the assumption regarding the generalizability of educational models of the developed world is both morally wrong and scientifically primitive.

Greenfield (1975) had raised similar issues at Bristol in 1974. he said:

> In particular we need to ask whether the theory and assumptions still appear to hold in the settings where they were developed before they are recommended and applied to totally new settings. Such an examination is not only appropriate but essential in the light of an alternative view which sees organizations not as structures subject to universal law but as cultural artifacts dependent upon the specific meaning and intentions of people within them. (Greenfield 1975:74)

Greenfield, as he explained in a later paper (Greenfield 1978) had three major concerns when he addressed the Bristol Conference. These were

1. to question the dominant theory in the study of organization.

2. to cast doubt on the mechanics for promulgating that theory from the developed world to the developing nations.

3. to question the legitimacy of training administrators to be effective by imbuing them with the theory.

These three concerns are still very important for us today in the developing world, and I shall examine each one briefly.

The dominant theory Greenfield was challenging was the positivists theory which holds that organizations are the same wherever they are, and regardless of what functions they serve. The search, therefore, is for a general theory of organizations that is so-to-speak out there waiting to be discovered.

Greenfield argues that to accept this is to make unproblematic that which is problematic, to ignore the role of human action within organizations, to reify organizations. He confronts the positivist view with a phenomenological perspective in these words:

> If we see organizations and individuals as inextricably intertwined, it may not be easy to alter organizaitons, or to lead them, or to administer them without touching something unexpectedly human. More importantly, the view that people and organizations are inseparable requires us to reassess the commonly accepted claim that there exists a body of theory and principle which provides the touchstone for effective administrative action in organizations.
>
> (Greenfield 1975: 71-2)

In a phenomenological perspective there are no fixed ways of seeing and constructing the world around us. There can therefore be no general theory of organization.

Greenfield argues that the way we interpret the world around us does not depend on universal ideas and values but rather is the product of our peculiar circumstances and settings.

He continues:

> Our concept of organization must therefore rest upon the view of people in particular times and places, and any effort to understand them in terms of a single set of ideas, values and laws must be doomed to failure.
>
> (Greenfield 1975:75)

Educational Administration has been greatly influenced by the system approach of the positivist paradigm. The view that educational administration is a unique activity has been rejected by theorists in the field (Griffiths 1977, Hoy 1978) for a general theory of administraiton which describes, explains and predicts behaviour in any and all organizations. Greenfield's call therefore provoked strong reactions. In 1979 Deblois observed:

> Somehow the monolithic perspective in the field of educational administration has been fissured. Professors and students alike began to take an interest in the alternative perspective and to explore the possibilities it offered.
>
> (Deblois 1979:1)

It is interesting to observe that no standard text book in educational administration that I know of presents the alternative perspective. While the controversy apparently still goes on in the pages of the journal the teaching of educational administration appears to be generally unaffected by it. Planners of training programmes in the developing world must recognize the controversy that surrounds the area of educational administration theory, and avoid pursuing paths that may turn out to be cul-de-sacs.

With respect to the second issue - the transferability of theories and models from the developed to the developing world, there is enough evidence to support the legitimacy of Greenfield's concern. There is a considerable body of literature on research into organizational functioning across cultures. Although, as Marshall (1982) points out, it provides no clear answer to the question of the transferability of theories of organizational behaviour across cultures, yet it leaves no doubt that we are in a controversial area, where caution is of the essence.

Lammers and Hickson after reviewing a number of cross cultural organizational studies concluded that organizations are culture-bound. Their findings are summarized in these words:

> The culture and sub-culture in a society have a potential impact on organizational form and processes: because outside agencies set cultural constraints for an organization: because dominant elites in an organization design and redesign organizational life in terms of culturally given models of organizing: because members themselves unofficially tend to organize and to counter organize in ways derived from sub-cultures.
>
> (Lammers and Hickson 1978:20)

Lincoln, Hanada and Olson (1981) in a study of Japanese and Japanese American reactions to work and organizations concluded:

> An emerging alternative view is that organizational phenomena are shaped by the cultural values and beliefs, as well as the institutional arrangements of the

> populations in which they are embedded. This research demonstrates that cultural factors affect organizational processes in ways that render universalist statements of the effects of organizational structures on individuals seriously deficient. Organizational structures may indeed be loosely coupled to formal goals but they are closely tied to the social and cultural orientations of the people involved in them. (p.114).

And Kiggundu et al (1983), reviewing 94 articles on organization in developing countries, concluded:

> In general, each time the environment is involved, the theory developed for Western settings does not apply, because it assumes contingencies that may not be valid for developing countries ... To the extent that contingencies for the utilization of administrative science in developing countries differ from that of industrialized countries, the transfer of management knowledge and technology (e.g. management development, curriculum development, technical assistance) should emphasize process rather than content theories and methods (p. 81).

Leslie Gue of the University of Alberta in a paper entitled "Is Educational Administration, Western style, Exportable" concluded that the answer was "Yes", "No" and "Maybe" (Gue 1982:22). He found that some theories (e.g. decision making) were suitable for export while others (e.g. Motivation or leadership) should be approached with the greatest caution.

Perhaps the third issue of the greatest importance for the preparation of educational administrators in the developing areas. Greenfield questions the traditional approach that emphasizes the study of organization theory and social science of organizations. He advocates the study of specific organizations and their problems and he calls for a stronger clinical base in the training of practitioners. There was a fair degree of support in this respect. A surprising source of support for the study of specific organizations was Griffiths, a devoted disciple of the positivist movement ... Griffiths writes:

> ... it seems clear that efforts to develop a general theory of organizations should be replaced by efforts to develop much more restricted theories. Organizations differ so markedly that we should not only be interested in theories about education, but in theorizing about particular types of educational organizations.
>
> (Griffiths 1979:59)

In 1978, Erickson in a provocative paper takes the field to task for its amorphous nature, for the absence of quality research, for its concentration on areas that have little bearing on education and its consequent neglect of issues that are at the heart of education. Erickson advocates more work in the areas of the consequence of organizational variation in schools or school systems, i.e. work on school effects.

Silver (1980:81:1) deems educational administration an applied profession and declares that the field of educational administration "can and should develop a systematic, cumulative, practice-oriented body of knowledge to inform administrative practice".

Yet in spite of all that has been said as recently as 1982 Bates found it necessary to warn against believing that much has changed in the field of educational administration. he laments that while the social theorists have generally given up the quest for a value-free science of society, the main stream theorists of educational administration are still attempting to develop general laws and principles to explain the structure and dynamics of all organizations. He is particularly concerned over the tendency to educational administrators to separate administrative and educational issues. He cites the popular texts by Hoy and Miskel as an outstanding example of what he terms "this conservative anachronistic approach to educational administration." He observes:

> It is as though the administration of schools and school systems consists entirely of processes of motivation, leadership, decision-making and communication conducted by professional bureaucrats who are responsible for organizational climate, effectiveness and change.
>
> (Bates 1982:2).

This brief examination of the issues raised by Greenfield suggests that we cannot import theories and models from the developed world for the training of our educational administrators. There is too much uncertainty and controversy - over theories, over what constitutes the field, over what is the proper area of focus for research and scholarly investigations. In addition, the doubt over whether models from the industrialised world will work effectively or at all in the developing world further compounds the problem.

<u>How do we set about planning for training?</u>

If the non-feasibility of importing training models and theories from the developed world is accepted, the important question becomes - how then do we, in developing societies, set about planning for the preparation of our educational administrators? Where do we start?

If, like Alice, we do not know or care where we are going then any route will take us there and it would matter little what training we provide for our administrators. We would all, I'm sure, reject the position as untenable. We would, on the other hand, accept that administrators must be able to ask and answer the question 'Manage for what ends?' It follows from this, that their preparation and training cannot be

carried out in a vaccuum. If it is to be meaningful, it needs a context, a purpose and a direction. It seems logical to suggest therefore that the first important step for a developing society is to assess where it is, to decide where it wants to go and to define as clearly as it can, the role it wants its educational system to play in its development. It is only against the kinds of decisions that arise from this first step that the training of educational administrators can meaningfully and realistically be undertaken. Only then can administrators be trained to view and project the school as an "organization in a cultural and historical milieu (attempting) to relate the objective need for schooling with social and economic realities" (Foster 1980).

Whatever the context in which we are operating, excellence in education stands out as one of the justifiable means for which we should be managing. I believe we would all endorse the sentiment expressed below and seek ways of making it a reality.

> ... we should not compromise when it comes to the educational achievements of our children. We must strive for the very best given the constraints under which we work. We must set our sights high and use every effort to achieve them. (Duignan 1985)

Excellence in educational as in business institutions is directly related to the quality of leadership provided by the top administrator or executive. There is a growing body of research literature that links administrative action with effectiveness in schools (Purkey and Smith 1983, Shoemaker and Fraser 1981, Smyth 1980).

What type of training and when should training take place?

If therefore, excellence is an overriding aim we hold for education we are faced with two important areas for decision-making:

1. We must consider the wisdom of continuing to appoint administrators only on the basis of their educational expertise, (where the successful teacher is the potential administrator). A better alternative might be to strive to move to the point where training is available and potential administrators can be selected on both their educational and their administrative expertise.

2. At the level of training, decisions would have to be made as to the content and methodology of training programmes.

Let us briefly examine these two areas. In putting forward for consideration what Andrews (1980) call the Specialist Professional Model for the selection of educational administrators we are not unaware of the magnitude of the financial economic and resources problems involved. We recognise, that in societies where the teaching force can be both professionally as well as educationally inadequate careful consideration would have to be given to the large-scale provision of training for potential rather than actual administrators. Yet, we believe that if the educational system are to be properly guided for effective education we cannot escape the urgency of properly trained leaders and managers. The assumption that good class-room practitioners make good administrators may not always hold. In any event, it

nourishes the deception that educational administration be it at the school or the systems level is to be equated with teaching. Early exposure of the teacher to training in educational administration will help both in selecting the best persons for administrative posts and in broadening the teachers' educational vision.

The second issue - what sort of training is needed? is no less complex. North American texts are replete with lists of skills, knowledge and competencies that an administrator must have in order to function effectively in schools. These lists can become quite vast and diffuse. Indeed, they are often so formidable tnat one is left to wonder to what extent they are to be taken seriously. For example, one writer (Nickerson 1972) endorses this illustrative list of 14 areas of preparation deemed necessary for secondary school principals - Change, Innovation and Diffusing; Curriculum and Instruction; Effective Communication; Finance; Human Relations; Learning Environment; Negotiations; Organization and Development; Political Science; Problem-Solving; Research and Evaluation; School Law; Social Awareness, and Systems Analysis. To this list he adds psychology, sociology, history, government and international relations and the value of technology.

Can we in the developing world contemplate this kind of training for our educational administrators? While it is unwise to dismiss lightly the experiences and ideas of the developed world it seems to me that notions of training such as this will not get us very far. On the other hand we must guard against going to the other extreme and providing our administrators with a set of technical skills and nothing more.

Fortunately, there are useful leads in the developed world which we can profitably pursue. A useful framework for arriving at the content of training is Brainard's (1975) three fields of expertise for school administrators. These three areas are:

1. technical skills and knowledge
2. human relations skills and knowledge, and
3. conceptual analytic skills and knowledge.

Technical skills and knowledge are those needed to operate the plant and keep it functioning. Examples of their skills are timetabling and budgeting. Equipped with these skills and knowledge the Manager can reasonably be expected to be an organizational maintainer, to keep the ship afloat.

Human relations skills and knowledge embrace a wide range of skills and knowledge necessary to deal with those with whom the administrator must come into contact, especially those he encounters on a regular basis. This is a vital area of training for all managers. The effective headteacher must lead, motivate, inspire, communicate, encourgae, reprimand and correct, and all this requires skills of the highest order.

The conceptual, analytic skills are difficult to define. These skills are necessary for maximising the effectiveness of educational administrators, schools and educational systems.

Using Brainard's framework of necessary expertise, planners of training programmes for educational administrators could identify the content deemed necessary for their contexts. Boyd (1980) has a word of advise for programme planners. He suggest that

while more research is needed on the attributes of effective schools and especially on the administrative behaviours that aid effectiveness it is clear that school management and the preparation of school administrators need to be rigourously redirected towards the enhancement of the outcomes of schooling for children. Useful conclusions may also be drawn from the literature on effective schools and effective principals. With respect to methodology Silver's (1980-81) call for a clinical practice-oriented approach might be considered seriously.

Can we proceed without research?

Having raised questions about the validity of transferring developed-world models and skills in educational administration to the developing world, I would insist that the first order of business for institutions in the developing world is to profile school administrators in their own settings. The planning of professional development and preparation programmes requires an indigenous knowledge base about the realities of school administration in a given context. Developing countries like ours in the Caribbean will remain in a state of intellectual dependency in educational administration unless the necessary research is undertaken to provide the requisite contextual data for programme building.

In this short paper, I have attempted to draw attention to what I consider the major areas for decision-making in the preparation of educational administrators in developing countries. I am very glad I did not set myself the task of making the actual decisions. Decisions hopefully are easier to arrive at if we know what we are making decisions about.

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